IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system comprising at least one primary station ~~(2)~~ and a plurality of secondary stations ~~(32, 34, 36)~~, the primary station ~~(2)~~ and the secondary stations ~~(32, 34, 36)~~ being interconnected via a network, the secondary stations ~~(32, 34, 36)~~ being arranged for transmitting return signals in a return signal frequency band to the primary station ~~(2)~~, the secondary stations ~~(32, 34, 36)~~ being further arranged for transmitting the return signals in only a part of the return signal frequency band containing relatively little noise, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the network comprises means ~~(40)~~ for mapping **a first set of** the return signals **of the plurality of secondary stations** onto **a first portion of** the return signal frequency band **and mapping a second set of return signals of the plurality of secondary stations onto a second portion of the return signal frequency band.**

2. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the means ~~(40)~~ for mapping the return signals are located in a part of the network where relatively little noise occurs.

3. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the part of the return signal frequency band is an upper part of the return channel band, the means ~~(40)~~ for mapping the return signals comprising a down converter ~~(48, 50)~~ for down converting the frequency of at least one of the return signals.

4. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 3, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the down converter ~~(48, 50)~~ comprises a block down converter.

5. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the network comprises a coaxial cable network.

6. (Currently Amended) A multiple access communication system according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ **wherein** the network comprises a hybrid fiber/coax network.